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FCC - MAILROOM

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
GOVERNOR

July 19, 2007

Kevin J. Martin, Chairman
Michael J. Copps, Commissioner
Jonathan S. Adelstein, Commissioner
Deborah Taylor Tate, Commissioner
Robert M. McDowell, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

WC Pocket No. 05-337
CC Pocket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman and Commissioners:

On behalf of millions of rural Illinoisans, I am writing to voice my concern over the Federal Communications Commission's proposal to cap the Universal Service Fund.

The Universal Service Fund is a critical tool to help develop wireless service in rural areas of Illinois. As you are aware, the high costs to establish service in rural areas are often not economically advantageous to wireless carriers. This subsidy is not a handout. Illinois consumers contributed more than \$267 million to the fund in 2005 and received barely a quarter of those funds back; none of which went to developing wireless networks in rural areas. Illinois deserves its fair share of these funds. This cap would hinder the ability of wireless carriers from developing this critical infrastructure.

The successful introduction of wireless networks is vital to the future of rural Illinois. Not only will wireless technology stimulate our rural economy, but access to wireless technology will heighten public safety and improve the quality of life for rural residents. The ability of our citizens and law enforcement to quickly communicate during a disaster or emergency will save lives and protect personal property. By capping these subsidies, the FCC will effectively cut off rural communities from the 21st century.

Capping the Universal Service Fund will be detrimental to rural Illinois; I respectfully urge you to vote against the proposed cap so rural Illinoisans will not be left behind.

Sincerely,

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor